

SLOVENIA



Slovenia Slovenia currently has troops deployed in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Lebanon, and Syria. Future efforts by Slovenia to provide peacekeeping troops and contribute to international operations will help bolster stability in the Western Balkans and strengthen our common defense against terrorism. Slovenia must also fulfill its obligations as a NATO member by meeting NATO Force Goals and ensure its border and customs officials are able to secure the country's borders. Continued U.S. security assistance will help Slovenia maintain its position as a positive and stabilizing influence in the region and globally.

FOREIGN RELATIONS AND REGIONAL COOPERATION: In regular public statements, Slovenia's highest politicians underscore their government's commitment to expanding cooperative arrangements with neighbors and active contributions to international efforts aimed at bringing stability to southeast Europe. Resource limitations are a concern for the government, which does not wish to see itself spread too thin. Nonetheless, the Slovenes are taking concrete steps toward a more outward looking and constructive role in regional and international security arrangements, as resources allow.

Multilateral

- The Slovenian Armed Forces has over 500 troops deployed to support the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, EU Mission Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR), and other multilateral operations.
- Slovenia takes an active role in humanitarian assistance with donations to the victims of the Southeast Asian tsunami, the Pakistani earthquake, and Hurricane Katrina, as well as ongoing assistance to refugees in Darfur and support for the World Food Program.
- Through its International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF), Slovenia has created the demining instrument of choice for the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the rest of the Balkans, and now even further afield in Central Asia and Cyprus. The organization has raised over \$203 million since its inception in 1998 (with the United States contributing over \$92 million).
- Slovenia served as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE in 2005, as the Chairman of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors for 2006-2007, and held the presidency of the European Union from January to June 2008.
- Slovenia is engaged with 29 countries in bilateral military exchange--most actively with the U.S.-and in regional cooperative arrangements in central and southeast Europe; it participates in or intends to contribute forces for five major multinational regional peacekeeping bodies.
- Slovenia participates in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) to halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and related materials worldwide.
- Slovenia has ratified all 13 international anti-terrorism conventions.
- Slovenia is party to the Wassenaar arrangement controlling exports of weapons and sensitive technology to countries of concern
- Slovenia is an active participant in Southeast European Defense Ministerial (SEDM) activities.

U.S.-SLOVENIAN RELATIONS: Since Slovenia achieved its independence in 1991 the United States and Slovenia have developed strong, cooperative relations on a broad range of issues, from promoting regional security to developing closer bilateral trade and investment ties. The U.S. was very supportive of Slovenia's entrance into NATO and other Euro-Atlantic agreements and institutions.

The first official U.S. presence in Slovenia dates from the early 1970s, when the United States Information Service (USIS) opened a library and American press and cultural center in Ljubljana. From its opening through 1992, the American Center worked to develop closer grassroots relations between the United States and the people of the then-Slovenian Republic of Yugoslavia.

On December 23, 1990, the Slovene people voted in a plebiscite to separate from greater Yugoslavia. On June 25, 1991, the new Republic of Slovenia officially declared its independence from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. A 10-day war commenced, during which Slovenian territorial troops fought off incursions by the Yugoslav National Army. The United States formally recognized the new republic on April 7, 1992. To develop U.S. diplomatic relations with the new state, the United States opened a new Embassy in Ljubljana in August 1992.

Since 1992, the United States and the Republic of Slovenia have developed an impressive track record of cooperation on bilateral, regional, and global issues. The United States has worked closely with the Slovenes to resolve succession issues stemming from the breakup of Yugoslavia. Slovenia provided invaluable assistance to the United States and NATO by facilitating the deployment of the Implementation Force (IFOR)--and subsequently SFOR--to Bosnia after the conclusion of the Dayton accords. With strong U.S. support, Slovenia has developed the International Trust Fund as the demining instrument of choice in the Balkans and is expanding operations to include the Caucasus.

On the economic front, the United States has worked to develop bilateral trade and investment with Slovenia. U.S. trade (imports and exports) with Slovenia for 2006 was \$883.5 million. Under the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act, the U.S. provided technical assistance on enterprise competitiveness, banking and pension reform, competition policy, and debt restructuring. Reflecting the progress Slovenia has made in these areas, Slovenia was among the first transition countries to "graduate" from the SEED program.

The United States supported Slovenia's accession to the North Atlantic Alliance and continues to work with the Slovenian military to promote greater cooperation and interoperability with NATO forces. The United States and Slovenia hold periodic high-level security consultations to help Slovenia achieve this national objective. The U.S. European Command provides a liaison team that works with the Ministry of Defense full-time to develop greater familiarity with NATO structures and procedures.

In October 1997, Slovenia joined the group of countries--now numbering 35--whose citizens enjoy the privilege of visa-free travel to the United States.

Given Slovenia's economic success and location, its history, language, business ties, and insights into the region, Slovenia is an important partner in advancing the shared goal of regional political and economic stability. The utility of this partnership was demonstrated by effective U.S.-Slovenian cooperation on a broad mix of issues at the U.S.-EU Summit held in Ljubljana in June 2008. More than geographically, Slovenia is a bridge from developed Europe into the Balkans, an area of the continent where significant diplomatic and security challenges remain.

Peace and Security: U.S. assistance will promote NATO interoperability and assist in the modernization and reform of Slovenia's military, as well as increase its ability to participate in international missions. Military assistance will help develop Slovenia's niche capabilities, provide English language training,

continue to promote non-commissioned officer professional development, and promote the rule of law, human rights, and civilian control of the military. Technical training will also be provided to Slovenia's deployable combat forces and support elements. These programs will be implemented through the U.S. Department of Defense.